
Online consultation with Member States

Survey response 1

Information details

Name of the State:
Japan
The institution responding to the survey:
Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Questions

1. What innovative practices did authorities in your state adopt to facilitate civil society's input to decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis, including through online channels? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
See the answer for Q2
2. Are there innovative practices that authorities in your country used to enable safe and inclusive online participation, which encourages a diversity of participation, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented parts of civil society? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
We have increased the opportunities for civil society organizations to participate in the decision-making process. For example, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when dealing with resolutions submitted to the Human Rights Council, we increased the number of consultative sessions we had with international NGOs through videoconferencing. The Government has also introduced online meetings, including with organizations related to persons with disabilities, who may be more affected by the pandemic. Such online settings have enabled the Government to further communicate with civil society organizations and better reflect their voice in government policies.
3. Do you have examples of good practice in including civil society in designing and implementing strategies to respond to the pandemic? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
See the answer for Q4
4. Do you have examples of innovative steps taken to minimise the impact of measures imposed during the pandemic, including emergency measures, on the free and safe functioning of civil society and on public freedoms (of expression, access to information, assembly, and association) as well as on the protection of personal data and privacy? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan has been ensuring individual freedoms and we have not enforced any mandatory measures that entail criminal penalties for disobedience. Rather, we have focused on advocating the use of basic sanitary measures in partnership with various civil society organizations. In addition, we have not changed any policy or law with regards to assembly or association during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Did authorities in your state implement any innovative measures to protect and facilitate civil society access to resources in the COVID-19 context? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)
During the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan made available websites and leaflets in multiple languages to provide necessary and accurate information on COVID-19 and to counter misinformation.

6. Has your state identified any good practices to identify, and protect civil society from, online intimidation and attacks (e.g. online threats, harassment, organized smear campaigns etc.)? (Maximum limit: approximately 5,000 characters with spaces)

In September 2020, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications announced a Policy Package in order to deal with online harassment, which has become a severe social problem. The Package includes the following four sets of policies:

- ☑☑ Implementing awareness-raising activities to improve information on moral and ICT literacy for users
- ☑☑ Supporting the voluntary efforts of platform service operators and improving transparency and accountability
- ☑☑ Revising the law regarding disclosure of senders' information
- ☑☑ Cooperating on and building up systems for enhancing consultation services for victims

Especially in the case of the third measure above, in April 2021, Japan enacted a bill in the Diet that amends the Act on the Limitation of Liability for Damages of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers and the Right to Demand Disclosure of Identification Information of the Senders. Through institutional reforms, such as creating a new judicial process about identifying information of senders, this amendment has facilitated the process of providing relief for victims of online harassment.